

REMARKS

Claims 21-35 are pending in this application. Claims 1-20 were previously cancelled.

Claims 22-35 have been added. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the claims in view of the following remarks.

Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as being indefinite.

However, the claim language has now been clarified and is no longer indefinite.

Claim 21 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Carter, *et al.* in view of Lucas, *et al.* However, claim 21 has been amended so that it is now clear that the same hard mask is used for forming or etching the conductor line trench and the contact hole. It is also now clear that the hard mask is re-patterned or etched to form the conductor line trench after the contact hole is etched. Neither the Carter, *et al.*, Lucas, *et al.*, nor any other reference of record discloses this unique feature. New claim 28 is even more specific than original claim 21.

New claims 22-35 have been added to assure proper coverage of the Applicant's invention.

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that the application is in condition for allowance and requests that the Examiner pass the case to issuance. If the Examiner should have any questions, Applicant requests that the Examiner contact Applicant's attorney at 972732-1001 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible. No fee is believed due in connection with this filing. However, should one be deemed due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the appropriate fees to Deposit Account No. 50-1065.

Respectfully submitted,

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